

MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Friday, January 7, 2022, 10:00 AM
VIA GoToMeeting

MAC Members Present: Chairman Swygert, R. Dukes, B. Rose, C. Woods, J. Massey, P. Keener

MAC Members Absent: N/A

DNR Staff: Keppler, Darden, Bell, Broach, Kendrick, Binz, Snoots, Prochaska, Milan, Levesque, PKS, McDonough, Pate, Weeks, Parker, Sasson, Czwartacki, Silliman, Smart, Dyer, Perkinson, Smart, K. Ryan

Guests: Chaplain Jeff Shealy (virtual)

1. Call Meeting to Order – Chairman Swygert:

Chairman Swygert called the meeting to order at 10:00.

2. Housekeeping- Abi Prochaska:

Abi reviewed the processes for those attending via Virtual Meeting.

3. Invocation- Pastor Jeff Shealy:

Pastor Shealy led the Invocation for the meeting.

4. Pledge of Allegiance- Vice Chairman Rose:

B. Rose led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Introduction of Guests/Public Comments: Chairman Swygert/Abi Prochaska:

N/A

6. Approval of Minutes: Chairman Swygert:

Chairman Swygert asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes (October 2021). B. Rose made a motion to approve the minutes. P. Brown 2nd; motion passed unanimously.

7. Reports:

A. Applied Mariculture Research to Improve Marine Fish Production at the Waddell Mariculture Center – Dr. Jason Broach:

Dr. Broach noted that they are doing extensive and intensive aquaculture research at the WMC. New offices and aquaculture systems renovated over the last five years provide increased replication of fish with these upgrades.

Applied Mariculture Research ongoing at WMC:

- Dietary experiments on Sea Trout
- Tripletail spawning research

- Artemia Replacement - which is a 3-year project. Due to challenges to procuring artemia they are experimenting to come up with alternative baitfish. It should be noted that the reduction of artemia in the diet = reduced survival and growth of animals. Biologists are still doing experimental trials.

Upcoming Research at WMC includes:

- Southern Flounder which will be a 6–8-year project
- Zooplankton Harvesters

B. Blue Crab Status – Dr. Michael Kendrick:

Dr. Kendrick reviewed the life cycle of the Blue Crab, noting they play an important role in estuarine food web and are also among South Carolina's most economically important commercial fisheries.

He explained SCDNR's Crustacean Management Section's long-term trawl surveys and their research addressing knowledge gaps in the fisheries. There are 3 primary long-term surveys: Summer Creek Trawls, the Fall Crab Pot survey, and the Estuarine Trawl survey. Each of these surveys have been in existence since the late 1970's, early 1980's.

The Summer Creek Trawls are within historic trends. The Fall Crab Pot abundance is down over historic numbers, and the Estuarine Survey is also within historic range.

The Crustacean Management Section are trying to get a handle on why the Fall surveys are down. Understanding variability in recruitment by studying habitat and effects of salinity and filling knowledge gaps.

P. Brown commented that he has seen a lot of charter boats using adult blue crab for bait; especially in the spring. P. Keener noted that global consumption and increased pricing has put increased pressure on the fishery and suggested being more proactive than reactive would be prudent. Chairman Swygert commented that he would discuss with Blaik and Director Boyles. Blaik said they would keep the Committee updated on the situation.

C. Engaging the Next Generation of Coastal Stewards – Julie Binz:

Julie reviewed the Education/Stewardship outreach program within the CRO Section at MRD.

- There are 2-5 educators on Staff
- They strive to give students meaningful outdoor experiences and encourage stewardship

- Increase scientific literacy through context; field/lab research skills
 - Program locations include Charleston, ACE Basin, Winyah Bay, Port Royal Sound
 - They reach 5,000-6,000 students per year, and 100-200 teachers through training per year increasing confidence and creating scientific literate students
 - High teacher turnover is an impediment to maintaining relationships with schools
 - Increased online science learning during the Pandemic has become very popular.
- The Committee members thanked her for presentation and excellent program.

8. Deputy Director Comments – Blaik Keppler:

Acting Deputy Director Blaik Keppler gave the following updates:

- The Celebration of Life for Phil Maier was greatly appreciated by Phil's family and thanked the Committee members that attended
- Noted an uptick in Covid cases at MRD, but most are very mild cases
- The May Forest Property: PRT is in the process of hiring a contractor to design a master plan for the combined properties
- Legislative Update: Creating regulations that will more clearly define our general statutory authority.
- Budget Update: Repairs at Waddell/Lab Protection Project/Replacing the R/V Lady Lisa. All projects are moving forward
- The 2021 MRD Accomplishment Report will be emailed to the Committee

9. Date, Place & Time of Next Meeting – Chairman Swygert:

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee is Friday, April 1, 10:00. Place TBD. Virtual attendance is an option.

10. Adjourn – Chairman Swygert:

Chairman Swygert adjourned the meeting at 11:39.